

February 17, 2017

To the chairs of Appropriations (Sen. Osten, Sen. Formica and Rep. Walker):

The Winsted Family Resource Center (FRC) is a valuable and necessary tool for our children. Our community does not value this resource as a line item, but in the care, concern and compassion that is shown to our children to help nurture and grow their bodies and minds. It is an interactive resource that promotes family time and encourages community. When I was working night shift and spending days at home with my toddler, I had no idea what I could do to help develop and prepare her for the time when she would go off to kindergarten. We found the Winsted FRC when she was 2 years old and they welcomed us to play groups and field trips and provided a plethora of community services and information that I had no idea existed. We have met so many other parents and caretakers and have built friendships in our community that will last us a lifetime. She learned the activities and songs that all young children should know, but I did not. I connected with so many other parents and realized I was not alone in being overwhelmed as a new parent. We are a very small community and there are no other places in our area with an open door policy where the children can learn, create and explore and parents can talk and relate. The FRC is a wonderful program for our community and allows parents the peace of mind to raise socially smart children and encourage family time without the burden of paying for a childcare facility. We plan to be in this town and this community for a very long time and it is so important that we can build these relationships with others, parents and children alike. The ability to spend time with our children and interact and play at their level on a consistent basis in a welcoming environment is priceless. As we all know, time goes so quickly and we are all spread too thin and it is easy to lose sight of what really matters. In Winsted, the Family Resource Center is encouraging all members of our community to build those relationships early and often.

Please do not consolidate FRC funds into a competitive block grant, but maintain the FRC line item in the SDE budget at the current level.

Sincerely,
Peter and Kalyn Flockhart
Parents of Molly and Harper
Winsted, CT